

July 18, 1999

Dockets Management Branch  
(HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you to express my concern about Docket #98N-1038, "Irradiation in the production, processing and handling of food." This proposal, currently before the FDA, would allow manufacturers to sell any and all irradiated food to consumers without any form of labeling whatsoever. I must protest.

Irradiation changes food. There's no two ways about it. Food treated with radiation is different from food that has not been. And time and time again, consumers have expressed the fact that, given the choice, they would prefer not to buy irradiated food. This desire should be respected. We are, after all, supposed to live in a free market society. Denying consumers information about the food that they buy makes it impossible for people to express their desires through the market. If food producers want to sell irradiated food without telling anyone, it is because they want to pull a fast one on consumers.

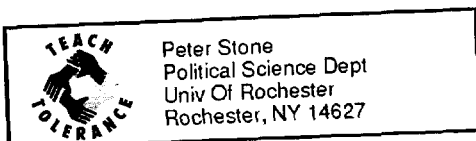
The desires expressed by consumers concerning irradiated foods are not irrational. After all, even partisans of irradiation must admit that the long-term effects of eating irradiated food are completely unknown. Why take such risks if they are not necessary? That is the quite sensible attitude consumers want to express through their purchases, and they cannot do it without mandatory labeling.

I strongly urge you to continue the practice of requiring irradiated food to be labeled with either the radura symbol or a statement saying, "treated by irradiation." Even better, I would suggest strengthening this rule by requiring both the radura and a statement. Thank you for your time, and I hope you will defend the consumer in this matter.

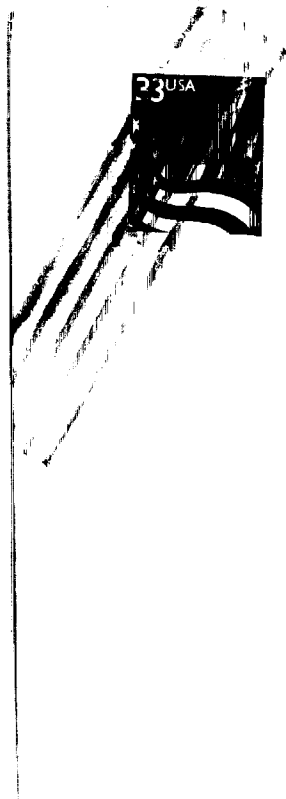
Yours Sincerely,




98N 1038



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 Peter Stone  
Political Science Dept  
Univ Of Rochester  
Rochester, NY 14627

DOCKETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH  
(HFA-305)  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION  
5630 FISHERS LANE  
ROOM 1061

ROCKVILLE, MD 20857